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# REFLECTIONS on Mr. DUNTON's Leaving his WIFE.

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*In a Letter to Himself.*

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S I R,

I Received your Letter, with your *Printed Case* inclos'd: I am heartily sorry you should have so *sad a Case* to impart, were it only to your Friends; but to be necessitated to make the World your Judges, and thereby furnish matter for the Insults of your Enemies, is the *Excess of Unhappiness*: Tho' I dare avouch, upon a fair Examination of your Case, for your gaining to your side the greatest Party, as rashly as the World is apt to Judge. They must needs condemn such a *Senseless Obstinacy as your Wife shews*. All her deep Policy in adhering to her Mother against her Husband, is but the *beighth of Extravagance*. She values Riches, and fears Poverty so much, that she Embraces the readiest way to procure what she Fears, and never to enjoy what she Prizes; *she builds her Fortune upon her Husbands Ruin*, and sees not how heavy it falls upon her self. This she may be sensible of, when 'tis past Remedy; which will be the more Deplorable, as it might have been so easily prevented. But no Woman that had *Lov'd her Husband at half the rate she pretends*, would have ever flipt such an opportunity of kindly obliging a Man of so Grateful a Temper, that he Studies to requite the least Courtesie from meer Strangers, *but would make it the business of his whole Life to requite a Kindness that came kindly from his Wife*.

Your Proposals were so *open, fair, and candid*, after the Charitable Arts you us'd to change her Carriage, hoping to have *caught her with Guile*, [2 Cor. i 2. 16.] that 'tis the greatest Wonder to see a Design so well laid, *so perversly lost*; nor had it been possible, had you been to deal with People of *Common Sense*: But what Treatment must an Honest Sober Man expect at the hands of a *meer Woman*, that has not Wit enough to distinguish a *Husband's Necessities from his Extravagance*; and thinks it Wisdom to tie the hands of a Husband, tho' tis to the Ruin of *his Credit, and her own*? The *Methods* us'd by you, were so *Wise and Cautious*, there's nothing left for Excuse on their parts. Mr. Larkin *Acted like a Friend between you both*; and gave 'em a fair Occasion to see and consider the Mischiefs they were like to be involv'd in, and must inevitably fall upon themselves; *for the sinking of a Husband's Credit, seldom brings much Honour to a Wife*. But be she as indifferent as she Pleases to that Point, a little thinking might awaken her Fears, least these ways of proceeding may prove the means of forcing you to such Measures for Paying your Debts, which in the end may prove of no great Advantage to her, with respect to *meer Interest*, setting aside those of preserving Peace and Charity; *nay, the Shame of the World, and Speech of People,*  
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which perhaps she better understands, unless with the help of her Mother, she thinks to bring the World to her side by *those Objections* with which they satisfy themselves; but 'tis plain there's nothing in 'em; tis *only a pretence to save their Bags*: For if there's no possibility of proving you a *Vicious Man*, what cause is there of saying there will be *no end of paying your Debts*? But if they will not *Trust Providence*, but will have you give over your *Trade*, for fear of losing by it, you offer 'em fair; let 'em put you in a way of *Living* without it, and use you like a Friend, and you'll soon take off all *Objections* they shall bring against you.

And as you have not *spared your self*, but made the World acquainted with what they pretended to object against you, so you do very well to justify your fair dealing, as in your *Reflections* you make it appear, that you gave 'em full satisfaction of the whole Circumstance of your Fortune; which obliges them to a Performance of what ever was Promis'd on the other part, both in *Honour and Conscience*, if they have either: But some Passages in their Conduct, make 'em both a little doubtful. As to your *Wife*, what *Honour* is in preferring her Mothers Bags before the Credit, and Quiet of her Husband? And as *little Conscience*, in *Swearing* before her Marriage, she would never suffer her Husband to take up a Penny upon her Jointure in case of the greatest Necessity, quiet opposite to a *Vow* she was going so Solemnly to make, in the presence of *GOD*; and this by her Mothers Command; which shews they are both of a Stamp. She might as well have made her *Swear* to hate her Husband, and do him all the Mischief she could; it would have been as Lawful, and as consistent with her *Matrimonial Vow*. But that which gives the Sanction to this Oath, (and inspires her with a Zeal to Burn, rather than Violate her *Vow*) is, that her Mother will not give

her a Farthing if she does. Thus you see Money is the *GOD* they love and honour, and deny themselves Credit and Reputation, Peace and Quietness, and all Earthly Comforts, for the sake of this *Idol*. It had been but just and fair to have told you what Religion she was of, that you might have chose whether you would have Married an *Idolater*; with which, I am certain, (had you known it) you would never have ventured to contaminate your self and Posterity; there's little Honour in deceiving a Husband. Therefore both in *Conscience and Honour* she was bound to have acquainted you with what her Mother made her *Swear*, that so you might have secured your self of some means to be Just, & pay your Debts: But that's the least of her Care; for if she owns that you and she are all one, and yet denies her assistance to pay your Debts, it plainly shews she would not pay 'em, if they were solely hers, and none of yours.

I can't blame you for not desiring Increase from such a Stock, unless you can mend it; there's small Comfort in having Children Nursed up in *Rebellion & Wickedness*; were that all. But you have another Reason, more prevalent with you, very much becoming a *Just and Honest Man*, which makes you content to leave neither *Heir nor Estate* behind you, and suffer any thing, rather than do the least Injustice; or that any one should suffer upon your account: This is a *Vertue* so out of their way, they can't in the least comprehend it, nor truly Act any thing else that is at all allyed to Vertue; and this is sufficiently seen in their unanimously rejecting such *Condescending Proposals* as those you made 'em; and shews the strength of all Combinations of Wickedness that can prevail to the making a sacrifice of their True Interest and Happiness, to their *Senseless and Obstinate Passions*; otherwise the Letter you sent  
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her by *Mr. Larkin*, would have made some impression upon a Wife that had the *least Spark of Love to her Husband, or Sense of her Duty*. But she had so far imbib'd her **Mother's Principles**, of holding the **Conclusion**, as spar'd the trouble of a further Answer, than that *her Mother had made her take a Wicked Oath, and she held her self bound to keep it*. You might well Divine what a Reception you was like to meet with, yet 'twas **Generously done to go your self**, and own to their Faces your real sense of their Behaviour, and what it had forc'd you to resolve upon, since they had neither by *Words nor Actions* given you the least Temptation to *Trespass upon your Friends* for their sakes; and as you were treated with *Passion on their side*, what need of Apology? Sure, if ever there's occasion for it, 'tis when all the *Laws of Conjugal Affection* are broke, and by the *Instigation of a Mother that had hier'd her Daughter with deceitful Promises to abandon her Husband's Interest*: And who it is that governs the Mother, may be gueſt at by her Actions. To have made a plausible Excuse for denying a *Kindness of that Neceſſity*, to one so nearly related, had been inhumane enough; but such a *Violent Affcveration, of being Torn Limb from Limb, rather then to assist you, that had Marry'd her Daughte*r, and to whom she was indebted, by Promise at her Death, a far greater sum; this Uncharitable Mind, to say the least of it, plainly shews *whose she is, and whom she serves, and who has blinded her to all that was capable of moving her to any thing that would be thought humane*. And however they may represent your Passion, the **Christian and Charitable Leave** you took of 'em, speaks you free from all *Rancour and Malice*; and whatever Passion you shew'd, it must proceed from a *Violent Transport to reform their Errours*, which they were so tenacious of, notwithstanding they look'd so *Monstrous* in

your Eyes: Especially your Wife's Crime was much greater than her Mothers; whose *Influence and Authority* can no way excuse her; for had her Design in Marrying you, been only for a **Joynture**, (which is plain enough) yet who would reject the Opportunity of Living happy till her *Joynture* falls, which you offer her upon such easie terms? And how ridiculous she makes her self in the Condition she chuses, and prefers *before a Cohabitation with her Husband, and all for the sake of a Joynture* that would not be much hurt by what you Propose. and perhaps may never fall to her? But you have *done the part of a good and true Christian*, by studying all you could to live Peaceably, even with those that were Enemies to Peace; and courageously resolv'd to run through *all Difficulties with a steady Mind*. And could you have *dispenced with the Paying of your Debts*, your Proposals had never come to raise such a Storm: But 'tis a most *Stupendious Wickedness* (as your Wife and Mother thinks) honestly to seek the means of Paying ones Debts: Their carriage in this occasion might incline one to think, could you have brought 'em such a Sum by never so Unjust or Unlawful Means, it would not have **disturb'd their Quiet**: For 'tis the same thing to keep ones Money Unjustly, as to get it so. And truly, Sir, as I desire to maintain an **inviolable Friendship** with you to the end of my Life, I am in no danger of losing it upon the account of blaming you for *Publishing your Case*. You say well you have tried all other ways: This may do some good, when well apply'd to 'em by that *Reverend Divine* to whom you have sent it, he being a Person they respect; and if it succeed, you promise to suppress the **further Publishing** of it: If not, the World must know a great deal more of *their Life and Actions*; for why should you be *felo-de-se* upon your own Reputation, to



to save a *Phantom*? For I believe they have None to lose; nor have not had a great while.

And now I can't forbear remembering you what a *high Esteem* you ever had of *Wedlock*; that I cou'd never sway you to my Opinion of it, which you look'd upon as a *kind of Cowardise* in me, but I assure you the World is now aware of *Widows that love Money*, tho' perhaps it is not come to the knowledge of such *honest well meaning Men* as your self; that suspects no more deceit in others, than you find in your own Breast: But now you see what work they make with such a one, when in their Power. But there are but few of those, and they may set their *Snares* long enough, ere they get any other; and it won't be long before the World will be *overstock'd with Rich Widows*.

Sir, I heartily wish a speedy end of your *Trouble*; and as of all Men you deserve a good Wife, because you know how to Value her, so since it is your Fortune, I hope you will find the way of making the best use of a *Bad One*.

But, as you well observe, had you the best cause in the World, you must expect that Men of a narrow Soul will be raising of Lyes, and saying that, which, when you appear, they'll be asham'd to own: All Men adore the Rising Sun, but few have any great respect for his Setting, except in your Case, which is so Just and Honourable, that there's good Reason to doubt the Honesty of that Man that does not become your Friend (whatever he might be before) upon reading your Case. If any are your Enemies, 'twill be only those whom you have obliged beyond any possibility of Requital. As to those you have been so often bound for, (or for their Relations, which is the same thing) the very stones in the Streets won'd cry Shame on 'em, shou'd they speak against you. But 'tis well known they are Persons of a more Noble Temper than

to act such a mean part; neither is there any possibility they shou'd. For that part of your Case relating to Mr. *John White*, (tho' but briefly hinted in your Letter to Mr. *Larkin*) is largely proved in the Letter you afterwards sent to his Widow; which Letter I have seen, and were it Printed, it wou'd convince the World (as it did me) that you have said too little, and been very kind upon that Head.

Thus have I sent you my Thoughts on your Printed Case. But this Solemn time of Devotion, took up so much of it, I had very little to spare for these Reflections: But because I look'd upon it as a Work of Charity, I did make bold to borrow more than I wou'd have done on any ordinary occasion; and I think I have said something to every Point, at least the most Considerable. How Serviceable it may prove, I know not; nor what to wish for you, I pity you which way soever it happens: I see no pleasant Prospect on either side, unless they can muster up some good Qualities for which you can find in your heart to dote upon 'em; for I am sure they have Bad Ones enough to vex your Patience. And were it Lawful to part from a Wife for any cause except Adultery, or fear of ones Life, (and in such a Covetous Woman that loves only her Joynture, there is some cause for that suspicion) otherwise I know not how lawful it is; but cou'd I satisfy my Conscience of that Obligation, I shou'd far prefer any shift I cou'd make of paying my Debts, before living with her.—Pray God Grant you Patience, if that must be your Lot, and direct you for the best.

Be so kind to let me know your success, for I impatiently wait the Issue. I can't be Unconcern'd in what so nearly relates to your Repose, who am,

Your Faithful Friend,  
And Humble Servant.